

**Fact Sheet**  
**Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration**  
**Washington, DC**  
**April 11, 2007**

## **Combating Trafficking in Persons: Protecting the Victims**

Human trafficking is an offense against human dignity, a crime in which human beings, many of them teenagers and young children, are bought and sold and often sexually abused by violent criminals. Our nation is determined to fight and end this modern form of slavery. -- President George W. Bush

A group of young boys pile into a boat with fishing gear and nets, sold to work the fisheries in Ghana, some as young as six years old; Cambodian children "rented" from their parents, sent to beg or sell gum on the streets of Bangkok; Dominican women, who accepted housekeeping jobs in Argentina, forced to work as prostitutes; Asian men, abducted and forced to work on fishing vessels; all are victims of trafficking. Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery.

The United States estimates that approximately 800,000 people -- mostly women and children -- are forced, defrauded, deceived, or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation around the world annually.

The United States is deeply committed to combating trafficking in persons at home and abroad. The response to this complex problem involves every branch of government in work to prevent trafficking in persons, prosecute offenders, improve laws, and protect and assist victims. This comprehensive approach also requires extensive cooperation among U.S. federal, state, and local government agencies, international governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and multilateral organizations, including the United Nations (UN) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP) monitors international efforts and coordinates U.S. efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

### **Protecting the Vulnerable**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) plays an important role in U.S. efforts to combat trafficking in persons, as part of its mission to protect and assist vulnerable populations, and to support safe, orderly, and humane international migration. Since 1998, PRM has provided \$30 million to IOM to support anti-trafficking projects. Through President Bush's \$50 million initiative to combat trafficking in persons, announced at the UN General Assembly, PRM also implements projects in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Moldova, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. PRM currently supports over forty-four anti-trafficking programs. These programs focus on victims' protection-preventing trafficking, assisting victims, and helping them

return home-while building the capacity of governments and NGOs to provide services.

PRM prevention efforts educate vulnerable populations on the dangers of trafficking through school, radio, television, and other outreach activities. PRM programs protect trafficking victims by providing services such as safe shelter, travel assistance and documentation, medical and psycho-social support, family tracing and reunification, livelihood training and micro-credit opportunities. These projects help empower trafficking victims to rebuild their lives, reintegrate into their communities, and to prevent re-trafficking. PRM supplements protection efforts with capacity building activities to train government and NGO representatives, and with support for regional migration dialogues to help governments build networks, develop legislation, and improve victim services.

### Examples of PRM Programs around the World

#### Ghana

In Ghana, PRM provides funding to IOM for activities assisting children trafficked to work in Lake Volta's fisheries. Children are forced to work under hazardous conditions and their plight has gained national attention in the U.S. media. IOM works with the Ghanaian government and the fishing communities to raise awareness, reach agreements to release the children, remove children from their exploitative environment, return them to their families, and assist with micro-credit enterprises to prevent re-trafficking. In four years, some 1,500 children have been assisted.

#### United States

In 2005 PRM sponsored IOM's development of the Return, Reintegration, and Family Reunification Program for Victims of Trafficking in the United States in support of U.S. legislation to assist trafficking victims. This program enables trafficking victims to bring their eligible family members to the United States. IOM works with NGOs, law enforcement agencies, the faith-based community, and U.S. agencies to assist the families of identified trafficking victims. IOM may provide pre-departure support for immediate family members, including travel documentation and transportation arrangements, airport assistance, and special escort for unaccompanied children. The project also provides safe and humane return to countries of origin for victims who want to return home. Upon arrival they may receive reintegration assistance to prevent re-trafficking. PRM funding has reunited sixty-two people with their families in the United States, and helped five victims return voluntarily to their countries of origin through this program.

#### Indonesia

In Indonesia, PRM partners with IOM to provide protection, return transportation, and reintegration assistance to trafficking victims. IOM collaborated with several police hospitals to provide specialized wings for victims in need of medical care. Several hundred of these victims had been trafficked to Malaysia for domestic labor and sexual exploitation. Managed by IOM in collaboration with local government officials, the project aims to develop partnerships between the Indonesian government and NGOs, and create sustainable support mechanisms for victims of trafficking. This successful project has assisted over 1,300 victims and continues to identify victims.

### Central America

The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), a regional migration dialogue in North and Central America, is committed to combating trafficking in persons. As a member, the United States, through PRM, has supported workshops for policy makers and service providers to increase RCM member states' capacity to combat trafficking in persons. Workshops have brought together relevant ministries in each country working to combat trafficking in persons, thereby increasing national coordination. Additionally, IOM developed a manual which includes best practices for assisting trafficking victims, to ensure ongoing training.

### Worldwide

Through regional dialogues, PRM also leads the U.S. exchange with other governments on best practices in combating trafficking in persons. In addition to the RCM, the U.S. government, under PRM leadership, participates in the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee, and Migration Policies (IGC); and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.

### Additional Resources

- \* PRM Website: [www.state.gov/g/prm](http://www.state.gov/g/prm)

- \* G/TIP Website: [www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip)

- \* IOM Website: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

- \* Department of Justice Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation  
Complaint Line 1-888-428-7581

- \* Department of Health and Human Services Human Trafficking Hotline  
1-888-373-7888

\* Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement line  
1-866-347-2423

United States Department of State Publication 11412

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